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### ABSTRACT

A distributed subscriber management system and method that controls access to a network preventing unauthorized traffic through the access network and providing centralized access control between user networks. The system and method provide controlled access  
5 through the use of one of several technologies including user authentication, using PAP, CHAP, RADIUS, TACACS+, or other standard authentication means. The method includes the steps of receiving a connection request from a user located on one of the User Networks; interrogating the user for userid and password information; encrypting the userid and password information; transmitting the encrypted information, via the access network, to an  
10 authentication server attached to one of a plurality of external networks; decrypting the information at the authentication server; and transmitting an authentication message from the authentication server of the external network to the access control node via the access network. The preferred method includes the additional step of challenging all data leaving the access control node.